



## RIVER AND WEIGHTED LOTTERY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## I Need A Permit:

### WHO CAN APPLY FOR A PERMIT?

Before applying for a noncommercial permit through the weighted lottery, it is important to realize these trips are not for everyone. Here are a few important requirements:

- The Colorado River through Grand Canyon is a highly technical river, not something for the inexperienced to try. At least one member of each trip must have the experience and skills required by the NPS.
- Noncommercial trips must be self-guided and may not hire guides.
- All noncommercial trip expenses must be shared among all participants on a full cost sharing basis.
- Once awarded through the weighted lottery, noncommercial trip launch dates may not be changed, deferred, or traded.
- Trips may be passed to qualified Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs). To be qualified, these PATLs must be listed on the original lottery application, confirm their co-applicant status online before the lottery drawing, and meet all other NPS requirements.
- The main applicant must be at least 18 years old when applying. PATLs must be at least 18 years old by the launch date.
- All Lottery and Permit fees are non-refundable. Applying through the Weighted Lottery costs \$25, and those who are successful are immediately charged another \$400 non-refundable deposit (\$200 for launches advertised through the lottery as small trips). The

deposit will apply toward the final permit fees. Final permit fees are currently \$100 per person and are due 90 days before launch.

- All individuals are prohibited from participating on more than 1 recreational river trip (commercial or non-commercial) per year through any part of the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the Colorado River.

## HOW CAN I APPLY?

For people who have never applied before, applying is a two step process. The first step is free and involves creating a profile. The second step is to apply through the weighted lottery.

### ***Profiles: Creating, Viewing, and Changing***

How do I create a personal profile online?

You can create, view, and change your profile (personal information, login name, and password) online at <https://npspermits.us>

Why do you need to know the date of my last year commercial or private trip down the Colorado in order to create my profile?

In order to give everyone a fair chance to experience a raft trip down the Colorado, individuals are limited to one trip (commercial or private) down the Colorado per year. Moreover, the odds of winning the lottery are weighted, giving more chances to those who have not been down the river recently. Note that we do check the accuracy of "last date down the Colorado" for all applicants listed on a permit application against our historical commercial and private records before issuing each permit; false statements of "last trip" date will result in cancellation of the permit.

Do I have to apply every year to keep my chances?

Even if you do not want to go right away, you still need to setup your profile. This is free, gives you control of your personal information, and allows you to choose to receive email updates regarding upcoming releases. After you have setup your profile, apply only in the lotteries in which you wish to participate. For instance, if you are not interested in going any time before 2013, you don't need to apply or even log back in before the 2013 lottery (held some time in 2012, probably May). Your chances will remain valid until you win a trip or participate on another trip (commercial or noncommercial). We do encourage you, however, to log back in from time to time just to make sure your information is accurate and current.

### ***Lottery Application Creation***

When can I apply through the Weighted Lottery?

For the 2007 lottery online applications will be accepted from October 1, 2006 through October 21, 2006. This lottery makes available the remaining 2007 launch dates. Applications submitted within the weighted lottery will be processed on October 24, 2006.

How much does it cost?

Applying through the Weighted Lottery costs \$25, and those who are successful are immediately charged another \$400 non-refundable deposit (\$200 for launches advertised through the lottery as small trips). This deposit will apply toward the

final permit fees. Final permit fees are currently \$100 per person and are due 90 days before launch. All lottery and permit fees are non-refundable. Note, the \$25 lottery fee is paid only by the main applicant, not by the PATLs.

I am transferring from the waitlist. Do I really have to pay?

You have the option to either get the money you paid in waitlist fees back or to get extra chances in the lottery. If you have chosen the extra chances -- this is what you get for the money you originally paid to join the wait list. If you would rather get a refund and use that to pay the \$25 lottery fee that everyone has to pay, just let the River Permits Office know before the lottery drawing date. We can make that happen for you.

Who must be listed on the lottery application?

You need to list yourself and any anybody else who you would like to designate as co-applicants or potential alternate trip leaders (PATLs) for your trip. Each person listed on your application will be required to separately login to the system and confirm their status as co-applicants on your trip. They may not submit a separate application or be listed on anyone else's application for that Lottery.

Can I be listed on more than 1 application?

You may only be listed on 1 application within any specific lottery.

How would someone accept their co-applicant status on my application?

After the co-applicant creates their profile, they can login and see a screen much like what the primary applicant sees. They should view the trip details then click on the button that says "Confirm Participation". They also have the right to click on "Reject Participation".

Why is it necessary for my co-applicants to login and agree to their listing on my application?

This requirement ensures the co-applicant will be given the opportunity to understand the consequences of being listed on the application and can therefore maintain their rights. Once they consent online, they can not be listed on any other application within that lottery. Further, if the application wins a trip through the lottery, the co-applicant's chances will be reset to 1 even if they do not participate on the trip. Asking co-applicants to log in and agree to their listing on an application allows us to ensure that co-applicants are prepared to make this commitment.

How many dates may be applied for when applying through the lottery?

Each lottery application can list 5 dates. By limiting each application to 5 dates, we are actually limiting the number of applications that will be competing with yours for the dates you choose. In this way you will have a better shot at the preferred dates you apply for. When a lottery application is picked, all 5 dates will be checked for availability, awarding the first one if possible before checking the second, etc.

How do I pay?

When you log in to the system to view your application, you can modify the application, delete it, or pay for it. Near the top of your application, select the

button that says "Pay now through pay.gov". You can pay with a credit card, a debit card, or online check.

Why are there only 197 dates listed as available?

The new noncommercial allocation includes 503 launches per year. Some of these launches have been taken by people who had permits under the old system and were granted deferments. In addition the plan for transitioning waitlist members off the waitlist and into the new lottery system allowed for up to 240 launches per year to be pre-booked by waitlist members for the 2007 through 2011 calendar years. Together this represents 306 launches that are not available this year through the lottery. You can expect the number of available launches to increase each year until 2012 when all launches will be available through the lottery.

Why are there no "small" trips September through May?

Since small groups can fit on standard sized trips, these groups are free to apply for small sized trips and for standard sized trips. By definition, small sized trips may not include more than 8 people at any time, and they occur only in the summer, the season when large size beach campsites are in high demand. Throughout the rest of the year, trip sizes are not restricted to the 8 person maximum because fewer trips are launching and there is less demand for the large size beach campsites.

Exactly how will the weighted lottery work?

As you apply and submit your application, you will be able to see exactly how many chances your application will get in the lottery. Having a chance in the lottery is somewhat like having a tiny copy of your application thrown into a hat. The computer will randomly pick from the hat, and that application will be considered in full before going on to the next drawing from the hat.

What dates will be available in this lottery?

In the 2006 lottery there will be 197 total launches available for various dates throughout the 2007 calendar year. 149 of those dates will be for standard sized trips (1 - 16 participants), and 48 will be for small trips (1 - 8 participants).

Standard Size Trips (for 1 - 16 participants):

- Jan 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28
- Feb 2, 3, 5, 6
- Mar 4, 4, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 9, 11, 12, 12, 13, 14, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31
- Apr 19
- May 3, 12, 16, 18, 19, 24, 29
- Jun 12, 13, 14, 23, 27, 29
- Jul 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31
- Aug 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 27
- Sep 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 11, 11, 12, 13, 13, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 27, 29, 29
- Oct 7, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 19, 20, 25, 25, 26, 27, 27, 28, 29, 29, 30, 31, 31
- Nov 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
- Dec 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24-31

Small Size Trips (for 1 - 8 participants):

- Apr 6, 12, 14, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 30
- May 4, 10, 12, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30

- Jun 5, 7, 9, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29
- Jul 3, 7, 13, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31
- Aug 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28

Can I apply through the mail?

The website does not have to be used to complete lottery applications. However, you are strongly encouraged to take charge of your own personal and application information by applying online (<https://npspermits.us>). If you cannot complete the application online, call the River Permits Office for more information.

If someone's name appears on several applications, what will be the consequence?

The software for the on-line lottery will only allow a person to get 1 profile, and this profile can be attached to only 1 application for any given lottery. If someone finds a way around this restriction and one of their application wins, the trip may be forfeit. We say "may" only because if the person's inclusion on the application did not add chances to the application, then it might make sense to just disqualify that person from the trip, not cancel the trip for the rest of the participants.

If someone's payment doesn't go through, will they lose out through the lottery?

If their payment (i.e. credit card, debit card, or online check) is denied, they cannot complete the application and therefore cannot apply. Included in the lottery application process is a payment section through pay.gov (online payment portal of the US Department of the Treasury). If you fail to pay your lottery fee, your lottery application process will never be completed. If your application is accepted, your payment method was proven to be good.

Will I be given the chance to accept or refuse a trip before the trip deposit fee is charged?

Through the lottery you are given the chance to apply or not apply for up to five trip launch dates. You should only apply for those trips you know you would accept. In the future, deposit fees will be automatically charged for those who win.

Is it better to submit separate applications or list everyone on one application?

It is worth keeping in mind that under the new system trips may not be deferred or swapped. They can, however, be passed to co-applicants from the original lottery application who qualify as Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs). So, it is very wise for every lottery application to include at least the main applicant and two others. In the future deposits (\$400 for a standard sized trip and \$200 for a small sized trip) will be automatically charged for any trip that wins through the lottery (applicants will pre-authorize this charge with their lottery applications, and the payment will only go through if the lottery application wins). For this reason groups should not subdivide and submit multiple applications unless they are willing to win two trips, not go together, and not go at the same time.

How can I maximize my group's chance of getting a trip?

Here are some suggestions to maximize your group's chance of success. First, welcome inclusion of those transferring from the waitlist with extra chances - their "extra chances" will help your application. Second, make sure any application you submit lists at least two PATLs (they don't have to be the most experienced). Third, if you choose to chance subdividing your group so multiple applications can be submitted, make sure everyone is willing to not go together

should more than one of your applications win. Fourth, if you do subdivide, list those with 1 chance as members of one lottery application and keep them separate, if possible, from the application you submit where all members have 5 chances.

How many applications do you anticipate being submitted for this lottery?

Since this is our first lottery, we do not know how many applications will be submitted. 4,000 to 7,000 is a probably a good guess, but the number could be lower or higher. After this lottery is held, we will provide detailed statistics. If 5,000 applications are submitted for the roughly 200 launch dates (really 197), that would represent an average 1 in 25 of success. Of course, your total chances and the dates being applied for will make a difference

If I want to maximize my chance in the lottery, are certain dates better choices than others?

From working with the waitlist in the past, we have seen that May and June dates tend to have high demand. Winter dates tend to have very low demand. You may want to check-out our summary of the transition stage 2 process and see our list of what months filled first: <http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/upload/synopsis-stage2.pdf>

If I went 3 years ago and apply with someone who hasn't gone as recently, will I reduce their total chances to 3?

Yes, if you sign up with people who would otherwise get 5 chances, you will reduce their total chances to 3. The new system is setup to favor giving control of trips into the hands of people who have not been lucky enough to go on the river as recently as others. These people still have the right to include more experienced others later as participants, but to include them as co-applicants and potential alternate trip leaders, the group's chances in the lottery will be reduced. Of course, if you get lucky enough, it will only take 1 chance for you to win through the lottery.

I am transferring from the waitlist with extra chances. What if I never win?

The waitlist is ending right now. This does not mean that our commitment to getting you on a trip is ending. We predict that most waitlist members who transition to the lottery with extra chances will experience shorter wait times than they would have experienced. Yet, because this is a lottery, it is likely that some might also experience longer wait times, and we don't want to see this happen. For this reason we have spoken about using "adaptive management" to limit any increased waits. In the upcoming months we will be working to define exactly how we will do this.

## ***Claiming Cancellations***

What will happen with launch dates from unclaimed or cancelled trips?

Follow-up lotteries will be used whenever cancellations occur, or if any launch dates remain available after all applications are considered from the main lottery. The process will start with emails being sent to all people who indicated within their profiles that they wish to receive email notifications of upcoming lotteries and available dates. People will have approximately 5 days to apply online, and the lottery applications will be processed shortly thereafter.

Can I camp out at Lees Ferry with my boats and wait for a "no show"?

No. Due to the cancellation policies, "no shows" are extremely rare. All dates will be awarded through the lottery process.

## **I HAVE A PERMIT:**

### **PRE-TRIP QUESTIONS**

#### ***Participants***

Is there an age restriction for children on a private/noncommercial river trip?

While trip leaders must be at least 18 years of age, the National Park Service does not have an age restriction for other participants on private/noncommercial river trips. Please note that all trip members must have and wear a USCG approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for the size and weight of that river runner. Whitewater rafting PFD's for small children are available.

Can I invite whoever I want on my trip?

Within the maximum group size limits, you can invite anyone onto your trip who will not have been on any prior commercial or noncommercial trip through the Lees Ferry to Diamond Creek section of the river within the same calendar year. This can include people who were on the waitlist, people who were not on the waitlist, people who applied on other lottery applications, and people who are already planning to participate on other trips in other years.

Can I change my passenger list or gear after sending you my trip application?

Participant names may be changed online before launch. Before going to Lees Ferry, ensure that each participant will have picture ID and the total number of participants (including the permittee) does not exceed 16 at any one time. The trip leader must be present the entire trip. You may change or add boats at Lees Ferry. Just be sure to show up with the required gear associated with the additions. Between 30 and 90 days before launch, the trip leader will be allowed to request that additional trip participants be added to the trip. For these late additions there will be the normal \$100 charge per added person plus an additional late fee of \$100 per added person. Trip participants may not be added within 30 days of launch.

Why is it necessary for trip participants I list on my successful permit application to log in and confirm their participation on my trip?

There are several reasons. First, our policy dictates that any person may participate on at most one trip (whether commercial or private) down the Colorado river each year. Thus, a person participating on your trip will not be able to participate on any other trip during that calendar year. Second, if a person is listed as a participant on your permit at the time your trip launches, then the system will record that participation as the person's "most recent trip down the river" and will adjust future lottery preference points accordingly. Asking trip participants to log in and confirm their participation allows us to ensure that participants are prepared to make this commitment.

#### ***What If I Can't Make the Trip?***



Can I change, defer, or swap my launch date?

Launch dates awarded through the lottery may not be changed, deferred, or swapped.

Who can I pass my trip to if I can't make it?

Permits may be transferred to any of the Potential Alternate Trip Leaders (PATLs) listed on the original lottery application provided the PATL has not already participated on another trip that year. You must contact the River Permits Office for assistance.

What if I did not include a co-applicant or PATL on my original lottery application?

If the trip leader can't go and no alternate trip leaders are named on the original lottery application, the trip would have to cancel. It would then be re-released through a subsequent lottery.

## THE TRIP

### *Launch Ramp*

How early/soon may I arrive at Lees Ferry prior to my launch?

You may arrive up to one (1) day prior to your launch and utilize the noncommercial river campsite at Lees Ferry. If you arrive earlier you will have to use the Lees Ferry Campground located one mile from the launch ramp and you must pay the campground user fee.

How early/soon may I rig my boats and equipment on the launch ramp?

The day before your launch, you may unload your boats and equipment on the launch ramp **after** the private/noncommercial trips launching that day have moved off the launch ramp. Trips have usually launched by 1:00PM each day, but it could be later if the trip is delayed. **YOU MUST CHECK IN** with the Lees Ferry Ranger **before** unloading anything. If you are unable to locate the Lees Ferry Ranger, look for instructions on the bulletin board located on the downstream side of the launch ramp.

How can I arrange time for a river trip orientation?

All river trip orientations are given at 9:00AM the morning of their launch and all trip members will complete a river checkout and an orientation program with the Lees Ferry Ranger. You do not need to call ahead as all orientations are held at 9:00AM.

What do I do if I do not have a picture id?

Participants without photo identification (i.e., driver's license, state issued identification or passport) will NOT be allowed on the trip.

Who do I contact for more information?

The telephone system at the River Permits Office is automated and Toll Free. Messages may be left at the mailboxes on options 2, 3 and 5. All messages will be returned as soon as possible. The River Permits Office is staffed Monday through Friday, 7:00 am till 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm till 5:00 pm, except Holidays. 1-800-959-9164, (for outside the U.S. dial 928-638-7843) menu options: 1 = 1 to 2 day river trips, 2 = commercial river trips, 3 = info on the weighted lottery, 4 =

cancellation information, 5 = all questions. River Permits Office, Grand Canyon National Park, PO Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ, 86023, Fax (928) 638-7844. email: [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) website: [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)

### ***On the River***

Do outboard motors need to be a 4-stroke motor?

Yes, a 4-stroke motor is much cleaner than a 2-stroke motor, which uses a fuel/oil mixture. A 4-stroke motor is required by park regulations.

Do rafts need navigation lights to travel at night?

A raft with a motor needs a red and green light displayed on the bow and a white 360-degree light from the stern (US Coast Guard Regulations). A raft without a motor needs to have a flashlight or lantern ready for display to avert a collision with another boat (US Coast Guard Regulations). All rafts traveling at night must have someone on watch to warn any oncoming boats to avoid a collision.

Are the caves open for exploration?

No, all caves are closed to visitation.

### ***Lower Gorge and Takeout***

Are there many camps in the Lower Granite Gorge?

There are about 10 camps in the gorge. Most camps are between river mile 225 and 245, with one at 248, 253, 259 and 273. The camps have heavy vegetation encroachment and beach erosion. During the summer finding a camp is much more difficult due to the number of trips.

Can we hike in Spencer Canyon?

No, the Hualapai Tribe has closed Spencer Canyon for hiking.

Is the Pearce Ferry take out area open?

Pearce Ferry has been dry since 2002 due to low lake levels at Lake Mead. Pearce Ferry may open again when the lake level exceeds 1180' elevation.

Does my trip need a motor to get to South Cove?

The river current presently ends in Iceberg Canyon about 5 miles from the South Cove take out. The lake frequently has wind 5-15 miles per hour from the south. This makes rowing a raft a bit more difficult since the direction of travel is to the south. A motor definitely makes travel across the lake much faster. Most trips use a 10-20 hp motor.

How far is it from Pearce Ferry to South Cove?

The distance is about 16 miles.

How big is the take out area at South Cove?

The raft take out area varies due to lake levels. The take out area is about 150 feet wide, and is in use by commercial and noncommercial trips on a daily basis during the summer.

What is the best time to take out?

Early in the morning is best.

Is there a lot of lake boat traffic?

The summer season is busy with multiple jet boat pick ups of commercial passengers, lake visitors with a variety of boats and Hualapai tour boats that operate between river miles 260 and 263.

## ***Emergency***

When is a ground to air radio needed?

Ground to air radios are used by river runners in the event of a needed rescue, accident or medical emergency requiring evacuation. The main emergency frequency is 121.5MHz. Signaling mirrors and 3' x 10' orange signal panels are required for all river trips, a ground to air radio is optional but recommended equipment. More information is listed in both the Commercial Operating Requirement or in the Non Commercial Regulations.

Do you know what type of ground to air radio I should buy or rent for my trip?

VHF radio/ground to air. Look in Regulations, Supplement E, for frequency numbers. You can rent radios from Canyon REO (928)774-3377 or Professional River Outfitters (928) 779-1512. Sporties Pilot Shop in Ohio sells communication and navigation transceivers that operate on frequencies 118.00 - 13.975. Ask about Brand sport 1300 or Bendix King programmable KX99 models. For information call customer service (513) 735-9000 or (800 )543-8633.

Do cell phones work on the river?

Cell phones generally DO NOT work at Lees Ferry and DO NOT work on your river trip. Before launching, there is a pay phone at Lees Ferry and at Marble Canyon. After launching, only Phantom Ranch has a pay phone.

Who does our family contact if there is an emergency (severe illness or death) while we are on our river trip?

Your family should contact Grand Canyon National Park Dispatch at (928) 638-7805.

## **WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE FROM THE OLD WAITLIST SYSTEM?**

What happened to the people from the old waitlist system?

While enacting the new system, we have tried to be fair to former waitlist members. Under the old system we released approximately 240 noncommercial trips per year, and around 50 of these were winter dates. People joined the waitlist to be in line to eventually get one of these dates. Before starting the transition process, we projected how long it would take for each existing waitlist member under the old system to reach the top portion of the waitlist and schedule a launch, and we notified each member of our findings. Next, we released 240 launch dates per year from 2007 through 2011 to waitlist members (notice, this is the same number of launch dates as previously released each year through the old system). Finally, in ending the waitlist we gave each member a choice, they could take a full refund of the waitlist fees they had paid us, or they could accept extra chances in the lottery with some added assurance.

The extra chances are very much designed to ensure most former waitlist members "win" through the lottery as soon or sooner than they would have under the old system. The "added assurance" is that if they do not win a trip as soon or sooner, we will step forward using adaptive management to help them in some way. We haven't defined that way, but we have a good idea and will be detailing this plan in the next few months. It may involve adding many additional chances for people who reach this point and capping their wait through pre-awarding some noncommercial launches to this group.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### *Profiles*

How do I change my legal name, date of birth, or date of my last trip?

One of the nice things about the new system is that you can login and change your personal information whenever you wish. Unfortunately, once you have created and saved your profile, you cannot edit your legal name, date of birth, or the date of your last trip. Please send us an email at [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) explaining exactly what you need changed and why, and we'll pass it on to someone who can make the change.

I can't enter my zip code into my profile, what do I do?

Sorry about that. Zip codes that include letters are being rejected. This is a bug in our software, and it is expected to be fixed in a couple of weeks. In the mean time, go ahead and use Grand Canyon's zip code of 86023. Then, later in October, please log back in and correct your zip code.

I'm transitioning from the waitlist and having trouble logging in. Help?

If you are having trouble finding the website, you can go directly there by typing in <https://npspermits.us> If you have successfully reached that web page but have never been able to login, here are some suggestions:

- Waitlist members should be using the username and password we sent them. They should be logging in to the login.cfm page (i.e. **do not click** on "Create New User Profile")
- Make sure your caps lock button is off.
- Do not cut and paste the username or password. Doing this seems to add some hidden characters. Please just retype the username and password.
- Your temporary login name is 8 characters long: two numbers, a pound symbol, a zero, and four other numbers. (your temporary login name was your 2005 waitlist number)
- Your password does not contain any numbers. Also, some emails are showing capital i and small L the same. If you have one of these in your password, we suggest trying both variations.
- Sometimes there is a delay at this point, and the "incorrect login" page may flash or stay present for a few seconds. Watch the progress bar to make sure the page has finished loading.

If you are still having trouble, please send us an email at [grca\\_riv@nps.gov](mailto:grca_riv@nps.gov) explaining the problem and include your phone number so we can call you back.

Why are some of the dates I chose in Transition Stage 2 still available?

As outlined in the Transition Stage 2 newsletter, approximately 24% of the total noncommercial allocation was to be released through Transition Stage 2 according to preset limits. For instance, these limits prevented us from booking more than 8 standard size trips and 3 small size trips per month within April, May, June, July, and August. Further, no more than 2 standard sized trips and 1 small sized trip could be booked within any week. Once we reached the limit for any week or month, all other Transition Stage 2 requests for not yet booked launch dates within the same time frame had to be denied. Now that the lottery is about to occur, every remaining launch is being listed as available and can be requested through the lottery.

I went on a river trip in 2006. Shouldn't I get 1 chance in this lottery?

The minimum number of chances anyone should get is 1 chance in this lottery. This has not been reflected properly in the program and is being fixed. Anyone who went on a trip launching anytime after 1/1/2005 should get 1 chance.